

Battle Mountain District Annual Report 2014



Vegas to Reno Race



Goat Peak Fire
Aerial Seeding

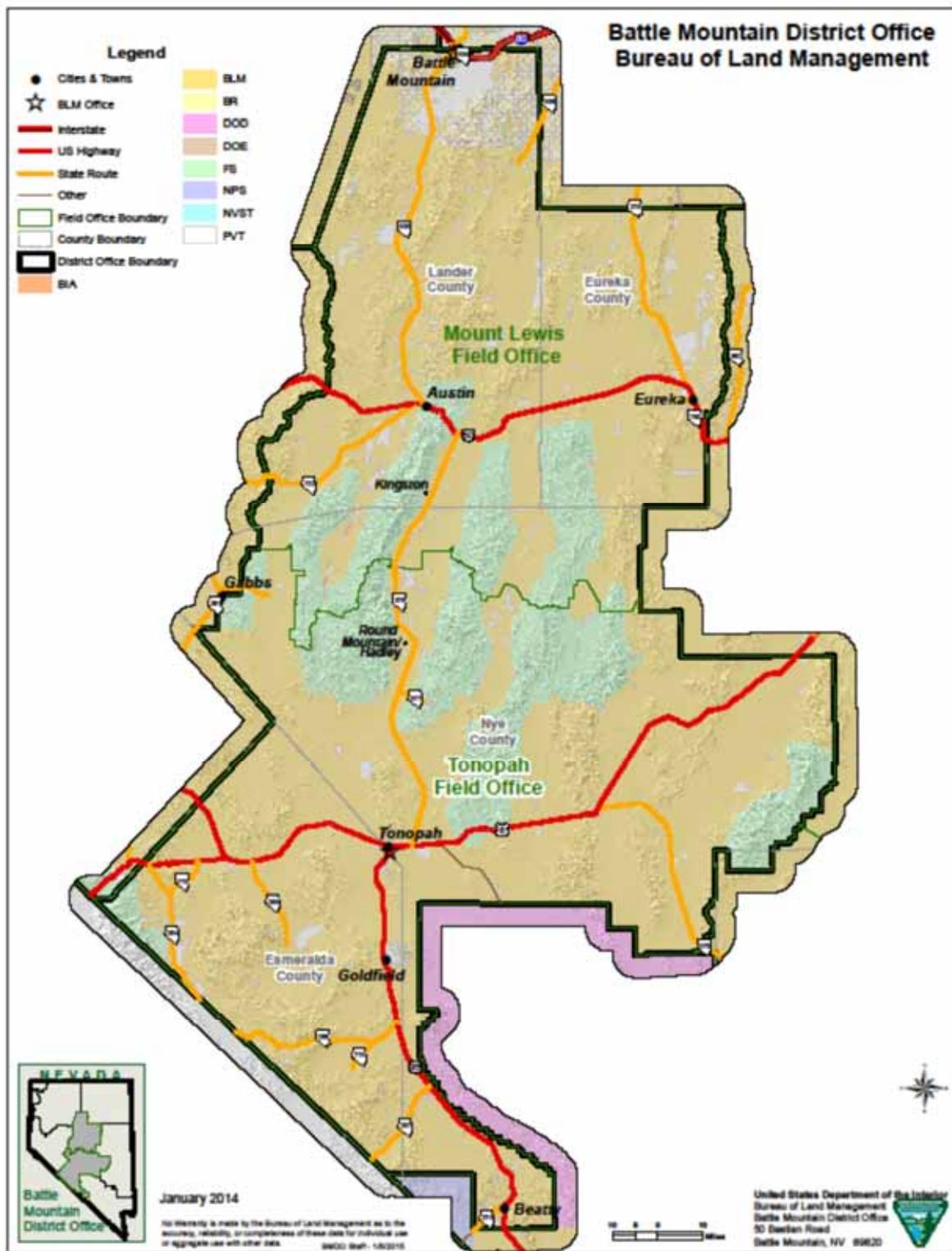


Frazier Fire Creek One year after Fire



The 10th Boot Straps Crew





The Battle Mountain District Office (BMDO) manages approximately 10.5 million acres of public land within Eureka, Esmeralda, Lander and Nye Counties. Aside from historic mining and ranching, mountain ranges and wide open valleys in the BMDO support wildlife, livestock and wild horses and burros and dispersed and developed recreation.

“The BMDO is committed to providing efficient, effective and environmentally responsible management of your public lands,” Doug Furtado, District Manager.

Minerals Management

Mount Lewis Field Office

American Vanadium Gibellini Project

This Project is located 20 miles south of Eureka and includes an open pit with water and a power line ROW. The plan boundary includes 730 acres with 539 acres of surface disturbance. On-site power generation using a photovoltaic array and vanadium battery demonstration is part of the Project. A revised Plan of Operation (PoO) has been submitted and is being evaluated by the BLM. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared.

Newmont Phoenix Mine –

Newmont has submitted an Amendment to the PoO for the Greater Phoenix Project located 16 miles south of Battle Mountain with a plan boundary increase of 1,909 acres. Supporting hydrological and geochemical reports were submitted in June and July of 2014. BLM is reviewing the Plan and baseline reports.

Newmont Copper Basin Exploration Project

The Project is located approximately four miles south of Battle Mountain with a plan boundary of 1,122 acres. Surface disturbance is authorized up to 200 acres.

Eureka Moly, LLC Mount Hope Mine

This Project is located about 20 miles north of Eureka with a plan boundary of 8,307 acres. The proponent has scaled back construction activities due to financing issues. Litigation ac-

tivity is on-going. Baseline reports to support an Amendment to the PoO for a 180 acre boundary expansion were submitted. An EA, addressing the boundary expansion, is currently available for public comment.

Barrick Horse Canyon/Cortez Unified Exploration Plan

The Project is located about 45 miles southeast of Battle Mountain and includes 689 acres of surface disturbance. An administrative Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) was submitted to BLM on October 27, 2014. The EA was out for public review/comment from 12/5/15 through 1/5/15. The Decision authorizing the Project was completed in March 2015.

Barrick Cortez Gold Mines

BLM is reviewing an Amendment to the PoO for this Project located about 35 miles southeast of Battle Mountain. This Amendment proposes changes and adjustments to activities and operations within the plan boundary of 16,054 acres.

Barrick Ruby Hill - This Project is located two miles north of Eureka. An Amendment to the PoO for project expansion was submitted. Baseline geotechnical studies for slope design and remedial benching based on factor-of-safety are being conducted to support the Plan.

Golden Oasis Toiyabe Exploration Project

An administrative Draft EA is being reviewed for an exploration PoO for this Project located 39 miles south of Battle Mountain. The plan anticipates approximately 100 acres of disturbance within the plan boundary of 802 acres.

McEwen Mining Tonkin Springs Mine Closure

BLM has accepted the closure plan and has completed the EA for this Project. The Project is located 57 miles south of Battle Mountain and includes 482 acres of surface disturbance.



Newmont Phoenix Solvent Extraction Plant

Minerals Management

Mount Lewis Field Office (continued)

McEwen Mining Gold Bar - The PoO for this Project located 28 miles northwest of Eureka has been accepted and all baseline reports are completed. Public comment meetings are being scheduled for the first quarter of 2015. An EIS will be prepared for the Project covering approximately 5,071 acres and 1,300 acres of surface disturbance.

Klondex Gold and Silver Mining Fire Creek Project - Klondex's Fire Creek Project is located about 20 miles east of Battle Mountain. A PoO will be submitted for about a 135 acre plan area where underground exploration is currently taking place. This proposal is in the baseline analysis stage and completion is expected in 2015.

Timberline Lookout Mountain Exploration Project – Ongoing exploration is expected to continue 23 miles southeast of Eureka in support of the baseline analysis stage for a possible mining operation. The project area covers 57 acres.

Montezuma Mines Red Canyon Exploration Project – Ongoing exploration is occurring approximately 30 miles northwest of Eureka in anticipation of a possible mining operation to include 1,556 acres within the planning boundary and 125 acres of anticipated disturbance.

Baker-Hughes Scruffy Oz Project - Baseline reports for the Project 13 miles southeast of Battle Mountain were provided in August 2014 and supplemental baseline data needs are being sought. This Project proposes surface extraction of barite to include 2,180 acres within the planning boundary and 155 acres of surface disturbance.

NuLegacy Gold Corporation CMZ Exploration Project - This Project is located in Eureka County and covers 1,200 acres within the planning boundary and 200 acres of surface disturbance. An EA was completed and the Project approved in February 2015.



Barrick Cortez Gold Mines , Field Tour 2014

Tonopah Field Office

Corvus Gold Nevada North Bullfrog Exploration Project – The Project is located six miles north-west of Beatty. Preliminary results from exploration indicate favorable values and Corvus Gold Nevada has presented conceptual plans for a Mining PoO. Baseline studies in support of this proposed plan are on-going.

Mineral Ridge Gold LLC, Mineral Ridge Gold Mine – Mineral Ridge Gold LLC has submitted preliminary plans for a modification to their approved PoO for their mine located four miles northwest of Silver Peak. Baseline studies are being conducted within a plan boundary of 1,503 acres and surface disturbance of 785 acres.

Metallic Goldfield Gemfield Project - Metallic Goldfield has completed the majority of the required baseline studies for the proposed open pit mine about 1.5 miles north of Goldfield. A PoO has been accepted for a plan boundary of 1,918 acres and surface disturbance of 1,098 acres. A public scoping meeting for this Project was conducted on January 10, 2014. Chapters One, Two and Three of the EIS are being drafted.

Round Mountain Gold Corp., Plan of Operations Amendment - Round Mountain Gold Corp submitted an amendment to their current authorized PoO for the mines located at Round Mountain to include 40 acres of additional surface disturbance. This amendment was completed in the early part of 2015.

A.U. Mines, Inc. Manhattan Gulch Mine - A.U. Mines, located in Manhattan, submitted an amendment to their current authorized PoO to include two acres of additional surface disturbance. The amendment was completed in early 2015.

Cordex Exploration - Cordex Exploration is proposing to conduct exploration operations approximately 15 miles north of Tonopah on approximately 720 acres, drilling about 300 drill sites. Surface disturbance is estimated to be about 340 acres. A NEPA kickoff meeting will be held in early 2015.

Kings Valley Minerals LLC – Kings Valley Minerals LLC is proposing to conduct exploration operations for potassium in the Clayton Valley area on approximately 25,440 acres. There will be 12 drill holes. Surface disturbance is estimated to be about 120 acres. The application is under review.

West Kirkland Mining Inc., Three Hills Mine – West Kirkland Mining Inc. is proposing to conduct mining operations two miles west of Tonopah. Baseline studies are being completed for the plan boundary of 916 acres. Estimated surface disturbance is 492 acres.

BLM and Nevada Abandoned Mine Program– Under consideration is the closure of approximately 28 abandoned mine shafts around Tonopah.

Nevada Sunrise Gold Corp, Golden Arrow Exploration - The proposal is to explore for recoverable gold deposits by drilling reverse circulation and/or core holes, geophysical mapping, and construction of roads and drill sites five miles south of Tonopah within a 1,473 acre plan boundary. Environmental analysis of the proposal is underway.

Barrick, Bullfrog Mining Project– Barrick is proposing a modification to the closure plan for the Bullfrog mining project West of Beatty. To avoid surface expressions of groundwater, Barrick is proposing to conduct a partial backfill. Baseline studies are on-going. It is anticipated the amendment will be processed in



Gold Pour

Lands and Realty

Mount Lewis Field Office

Multiple communications sites throughout the District have been amended and upgraded by Verizon and AT&T. Additional applications are expected to be submitted for sites in the southern portion of the Field Office.

ROWs are currently being processed to construct additional communication sites in more rural areas, adding improved cellular and emergency services. NV Energy proposes to amend a power line ROW south of Kingston to provide power to Arizona Nevada Tower's anticipated communication site that was granted in 2013. A small communication site on Bald Mountain, located just south of Cortez Gold Mines is being proposed adding improved wireless services along route 278. An EA is being completed for this Project.

Two Mountain Top Communication Site Plans

- Two Communication Site Plans are being revised for Mount Lewis and the Argenta Rim in northern Lander County. Both mountain tops combined have 20+ communication operators.



Communication site facility on Argenta Rim



Communication site facility on Mount Lewis

McEwen Mining - proposes to obtain ROWs for two access points known as 3 Bars Road and Roberts Creek Road located west of Eureka in support of their anticipated Gold Bar Project. They also propose to upgrade the northern section of Roberts Creek Road

adding a water pipeline from a private well. A power line will be constructed following the existing power line from Machacek Sub Station.

The Yomba Shoshone Indian Tribe Project - An EA will be developed to construct a new water tank, water service lines and additional fire hydrants to service the Yomba Indian Reservation southwest of Austin.

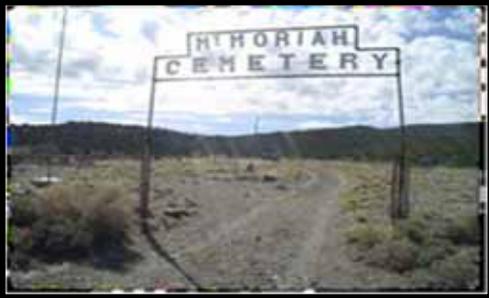
Barrick Gold Corp: Fiber Optic Line - An EA is underway to consider the possible grant of a ROW for installation of a fiber optic line from the Cortez Gold Mine site to the JD Ranch Employee Camp.

Mt. Wheeler Power - Baseline studies are being evaluated for an EA to consider a ROW amendment for Mount Wheeler Power to reclaim portions of a power line as well as build new sections located in Eureka.

Additionally, numerous other ROW requests ranging from new applications to amendments and renewals are being processed. Trespasses on BLM managed lands are also being pursued in accordance with the regulations.

Lands and Realty

Tonopah Field Office



Mount Moriah Cemetary

Mt. Moriah Cemetery - Nye County submitted a request for a direct land sale of 7.5 acres of public lands including the cemetery located nearby the historic town of Manhattan. The patent was issued in 2014.

Nevada Hospital Association dba Optica - This ROW is a multiple District (Battle Mountain, Carson City, and Las Vegas) funded project consisting of a fiber optic cable overhead and underground to be attached to existing power line poles. The underground portion of the line from Goldfield to Lida has been completed. Optica is in the process of installing the line on the new Valley Electric Association, Tolicha Peak 24.9 kV distribution line near Beatty.

Valley Electric Association - A ROW was issued in 2012 and construction north of the town of Beatty has been completed. This project is now providing power and fiber optic for the Department of Defense Nevada Test and Training Range.

Renewable Energy



McGinness Hills Geothermal Project

Battle Mountain District

Ormat dba ORNI 39, LLC: McGinness Hills - This geothermal project is located 27 miles north of Austin. Construction of one 40-megawatt binary air cooled power plant was completed in 2012. The second binary air cooled power plant is currently being developed.

Tonopah Solar Energy, LLC Crescent Dunes - The 653 foot tall power tower receiver, mirrors, power generation blocks, and hot and cold storage tanks have been constructed. When completed, the Project will produce 110 megawatts of power. Testing has commenced and it is anticipated that the power plant will be in operation in the summer of 2015. An informational kiosk with picnic tables, and appropriate signage of the project and surrounding public lands, is expected to be constructed in 2015.



Crescent Dunes Power Tower Receiver



Crescent Dunes Aerial View

Rangeland Management

Mount Lewis Field Office

Mule Canyon Spring Mitigation

The BLM worked with Newmont to complete the analysis and issue a proposed Decision authorizing the development of two spring sites within the Argenta Allotment. The decision is expected to be finalized in 2015.

Three-Bars Restoration Project

This project focuses on landscape level restoration in the Three-Bars/Roberts Mountain area northwest of Eureka. This area contains high value resources for Greater sage grouse, Lahontan cutthroat trout, mule deer and other wildlife species. This area also boasts largely intact native or perennial plant communities and is at high risk of catastrophic wildfire largely due to pinyon-juniper encroachment. The BMDO initiated an EIS analyzing numerous restoration and fuels treatments within a 750,000 acre footprint. The Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW) as well as Eureka County are cooperating agencies with BLM on this project.

The Decision is expected in 2015. Upon the signing of the Decision, the BLM will seek formalized partnerships to leverage funding and support for multi-year implementation of this important project.

Tonopah Field Office

Magruder Mountain Allotment Water Hauls—The BLM worked with the local permittee to issue a Decision authorizing up to 20 water haul sites.

Battle Mountain District

Noxious Weed Control - In support of Greater sage-grouse habitat restoration within designated priority habitat, the Lander County Commissioners provided generous monetary support to the Lander County Conservation District (LCCD), which is partnered with the BMDO to control a large infestation of hoary cress within the Indian Creek drainage on private and public lands. In 2014 approximately 550 acres of the Project area were treated.

The Tonopah Conservation District, in cooperation with Tri-County Weed District, has currently treated over 2,000 acres of noxious weeds throughout the District.

The Diamond Valley Weed District has treated approximately 100 acres of noxious weeds throughout Eureka County.

The Southern Nye County Conservation District continues to complete Tamarisk control in support of the Amargosa Toad Habitat Conservation Plan Agreement throughout Oasis Valley and within Beatty town proper. In 2014

approximately 50 acres were controlled.

Finally, staff on the BMDO continues to work on Tamarisk control in the Fish Creek drainage in Lander County. Cheat-grass also continues to be chemically (Plateau®) and biologically (livestock) treated on about 1,000 acres per year primarily in Eureka and Lander counties. Cheat-grass treatments are a priority in maintaining and achieving healthy rangelands.



BLM staff and Bootstraps crew treat Tamarisk (above and below)

Drought Response

Battle Mountain District

Since 2012, much of Nevada experienced record drought conditions in which limited forage production occurred and water sources began drying up.

In response to the drought, the BMDO prepared a district drought management plan and analyzed it in an EA. The Finding of No Significant Impact, or FONSI was signed in June 2013. The main purpose of the drought plan was to position the BLM to authorize appropriate drought response actions in a timely manner to prevent resource damage or adverse drought related impacts. The plan consists of a broad suite of drought response actions to address and mitigate livestock and wild horse and burro related impacts during drought.

The BMDO has made drought monitoring and implementing appropriate drought response actions a priority since 2012. Priority areas are: Herd Management Areas, Priority Greater Sage Grouse Habitat, Wetland and Riparian Habitats, and Intact Native Plant Communities.

Monitoring indicated limited forage production across much of the BMDO in 2012 and 2013. In 2014 there was a small increase to limited spring precipitation. Although this moisture led to more forage production in many areas in comparison to 2012 and 2013, drought impacted rangelands still dominated the majority

of the BMDO. Hydrologic and vegetative drought have been present since 2012 in much of the District and monitoring indicated conditions are worsening.

The BMDO has worked extensively with permittees to reach appropriate management actions each year by first seeking voluntary adjustments within the terms and conditions of current grazing permits. In limited instances where no voluntary agreement could be reached, or after drought response triggers were exceeded and voluntary movement or removal of livestock was not possible, the BMDO issued decisions temporarily closing grazing allotment or portions of them, to livestock use. Other decisions were issued that implemented agreements with permittees where grazing use occurred outside of the permit terms and conditions.

In 2014, permittees applied for and were approved for over 150,000 AUMs of voluntary non-use during the grazing year. We appreciate all of the collaboration that has occurred between BLM and livestock permittees and leases to proactively address drought conditions.

In 2015, voluntary non-use was achieved on 73 grazing allotments totaling 165,173 AUMs.

To date, seven drought decisions on the following allotments were issued:

- Battle Mountain Complex
- Shannon Station Allotment
- Diamond Springs Allotment
- Grass Valley, Simpson Park, and Dry Creek Allotment
- Roberts Mountain Allotment
- Argenta Allotment (2 Decisions)

Riparian Monitoring has occurred on:

- 13 Allotments
- 43 Drought monitoring sites
- 17 Stream channel Multiple Indicator Monitoring sites
- 21 Hydro sensors at eight sites
- 13 Water quality sampling sites, and
- 29 Water quality samples.



Daisy Creek in the Buffalo Allotment.
Cows were removed June 30, 2014

Wild Horse and Burro Program

Mount Lewis Field Office

Hickison HMA Nuisance burro

gather Nine nuisance burros (six jennies and three foals) causing damage to private property and agricultural fields in Big Smoky Valley southeast of Austin were gathered through agreement with the private land owner.

The three foals were adopted locally to Eureka residents and one older jenny was placed through the BLM's sale authority program in Elko. The remaining five jennies were transported to trainers involved in the Platero Project, a program administered by the Humane Society of the United States in cooperation with the BLM which is specific to training burros and has successfully trained and placed 124 burros into adoptive care in 2014 alone.

Wild Horse and Burro Water

Sources - In 2014, the BLM continued to maintain and supplement currently authorized range improvement water sources within the Fish Creek HMA at McCullough Spring, the Coils Creek Slough, Davis pipeline and the Brown Well. Inventory of over 40 other sources used by wild horses was also completed within the New Pass/Ravenswood and South Shoshone HMAs, in addition to routine monitoring for animal health and forage availability for wild horses.

Wild Horse and Burro Inventory Flights

The BMDO coordinated with the USFS to complete wild horse and burro Inventory flights in March

2014. A total of eight BLM HMAs and seven USFS Wild Horse Territories were inventoried covering over 3.3 million acres of public lands between U.S. Highway 50 and the Nevada

Training and Test Site. In addition to the Inventory flights, resource flights were completed on several HMAs to monitor animal health and distribution given the drought.

Tonopah Field Office

The TFO conducted a wild horse gather to remove excess wild horses from the Reveille Allotment in areas within and outside of the Reveille HMA. The court ordered Appropriate Management Level (AML) for the Reveille HMA is 138 wild horses. The estimated population prior to the gather was 168. The gather resulted in the capture of 120 wild horses, with no deaths, injuries or orphans. The TFO staff gave fertility control to 25 mares, and released the mares and 20 studs back to the range. The 45 horses released by BLM and the un-gathered population (roughly 48 wild horses) leave the estimated post-



Three burros awaiting adoption at Eureka Fire Station

gather population of the Reveille HMA at 93 wild horses. The sixty wild horses removed from the range were transported to the BLM facility at Ridgecrest, California for preparation for adoption.

Fifteen young horses were selected at the gather location and transported by BLM to the Tonopah Fairgrounds where BLM corrals were constructed. These horses were prepped for adoption by BLM staff in cooperation with a veterinarian out of Bishop, California. On Friday, November 7, the public viewing day was held with visitors from Tonopah as well as California and Oregon. Thirteen were adopted.



BLM Specialist hand feeding a sorrel mare up for adoption at the Tonopah fair grounds

Bootstraps Youth Project

Battle Mountain District

After two weeks of classroom and field training, the Battle Mountain Bootstraps crew, comprised about equally of veterans and new recruits, recently completed its 10th season.

From June through October, the crew, using chainsaws, removed 2,849 acres of encroaching pinyon and juniper trees from carefully

selected wildlife habitats (see GIS data on Greater sage grouse page) in central Nevada.

Although the Pinyon-juniper problem is little noticed by the general public, expansion and increasing density of Pinyon-juniper stands are having an adverse impact on wildlife habitats throughout much of the West. Since European settlement, changes in land use, fire frequency and atmospheric carbon dioxide have led to widespread increases in pinyon and juniper at the expense of wildlife. In the Great Basin, for example, the area covered by pinyon and juniper woodlands has increased 10-fold since the late 1800's.



The 2014 Bootstraps Crew on the eastern base of the Toiyabe Range, Grass Valley, Lander County

school young adults to work, teaching them useful life and employment skills, while accomplishing much needed wildlife habitat improvement projects. In 2013, the BMDO Bootstraps Program won the U.S. Department of the Interior's Partners in Conservation Award.

Crews from the Bootstraps program have been removing encroaching pinyon and juniper trees from some of central Nevada's most valuable wildlife habitats since 2005. In that year, the BMDO in partnership with University of Nevada Cooperative Extension, launched the program, which was designed to put out-



Bootstraps receives National Conservation Award

Battle Mountain District



Best in Desert Vegas to Reno Race

Best in the Desert/Vegas to Reno Off Road Race - In what has become an annual event, the District facilitated the longest off road race in the United States in August. Overall, 304 racers from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Ireland, Mexico, South Africa, Uruguay and the U.S. lined up to take on the grueling 535 mile journey from Beatty to Reno, Nevada.

Mount Lewis Field Office

North American Land Sailing Association World Championships - Smith Lake Playa played host to over 30 international land sailing teams in August's 2014 Land Sailing World Championships near Austin. The event, which drew hundreds of attendees to the Nevada dry lake bed, was also broadcast on CNN International prompting NALSA President Dennis Bassano to declare it "the largest TV audience ever to see a major land yachting event," and most certainly

Recreation

an economic boon to the town of Austin.

Tonopah Field Office

National Public Lands Day -The Tonopah Field Office took the lead this year in celebrating the 21st annual National Public Lands Day in September with two volunteer events in Central Nevada. One was at the Crescent Sand-Dunes Recreation Area in Tonopah, where over 20 adult



Land Sailing World Championship

and youth volunteers helped clean-up the picnic area and remove shooting debris from the Dunes. The second project was held at the Rhyolite Historic Ghost town near Beatty, where a dozen volunteers filled a 40 cubic yard dumpster with illegally dumped litter and trash, joining volunteers across the United States in helping to restore public lands.



National Public Lands Day

Rhyolite Nevada 150 Geocache - In celebration of Nevada's 150th anniversary, the Tonopah Field Office joined BLM Nevada in placing a commemorative geocache between Beatty and Death Valley National Park in the historic ghost town of Rhyolite. The purpose of introducing the BLM Geocaching activity is to engage the public in a fun, educational adventure that celebrates one of the great recreational opportunities Nevada has to offer. The Geocache was activated in October and information on how to find it is posted online at:



Rhyolite Geocache

<http://www.blm.gov/nv/st/en/prog/recreation/Geocaching.html>, or www.geocaching.com.

Forestry, Fuels, and Fire Programs

Battle Mountain District

Forestry

- 269 vegetative (fuelwood) permits sold.
- 874 tons of biomass utilized, and
- Four commercial woodcutting areas established.

Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

- 314 acres of mechanical treatment on the Eureka Project,
- 140 acres of mechanical treatment on the Lida Project,
- 45 acres of prescribed fire on the Manhattan Project,
- 2,221 acres of biological treatment on the Austin Project,
- 1,562 acres of seeding treatment on the Diamond Valley Project,
- 845 acres of chemical treatment on the Battle Mountain Project,
- 1,245 acres of seeding treatment on the Battle Mountain Project, and

- 5,000 acres of WUI projects monitored.

Non-Wildland Urban Interface

- 200 acres of prescribed fire treatment on the Seven Mile Project,
- 1,000 acres of mechanical treatment on the Sulphur Springs Project, and
- 2,000 acres of non-WUI projects monitored .

Rehabilitation

- 466 acres of the 2013 Goat Peak Fire were aerial seeded in January 2014.

- We achieved 100% success in initial attack in Fiscal Year 2014.
- Last season, the BMDO had 22 fires that burned 63 acres of public land. Of this total, there were five human caused fires for one-half of an acre and 17 lightning fires for 62.5 acres. We assisted other BLM Districts and agencies within NV, ID, CA, OR and WA with suppression help last year.

Aviation

- Our aviation bases stayed busy flying 80,282 gallons of retardant to 28 fires in the BMDO and surrounding areas.
- Additionally we managed eight resource flights in support of drought monitoring, wild horse and burro management, and restoration projects for a total of 33 days with flights.



Seven Mile Project (left and right)